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Forest Service News

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JAN 13 '83

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

S-23
10-1-82

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Right-of-way man marks 50 years government service

Robert M. Beeman, branch chief for right-of-way acquisition and land use grants in the Pacific Northwest Region, USDA Forest Service, completed 50 years of government service on September 25. Chief R. Max Peterson, in Portland October 1, presented Beeman with a Department of Agriculture award.

Beeman has worked in the Regional Office in Portland for 25 years acquiring rights-of-way for access to National Forest timber. He is the principal person who developed the "share cost" road building concept and has been responsible for working out agreements with power companies and other utilities for transmission lines and pipelines across the National Forests.

A Seattle native, Beeman earned a bachelor's degree in forest management from the University of Washington in 1932. In 1933 Yale University conferred on him a master's degree in forest management. He worked summers during college for the Forest Service in Idaho and Washington and received a permanent appointment in 1933, at age 23, in Alabama as a foreman for the newly-formed Civilian Conservation Corps. Later he was assigned to the Appalachian Forest Experiment Station doing forestry studies from Pennsylvania to Kentucky.

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In 1937 Beeman transferred to the Olympic National Forest in Washington State before the Olympic National Park was established. There he did "seen area mapping", a system he developed while working in the Appalachian Mountains. "Seen area mapping", mapping areas that can be seen from possible fire lookout sites, was used in making the selection of lookout locations.

In 1939 he transferred to the Willamette National Forest in Oregon as Oakridge Assistant District Ranger.

In September 1942 he volunteered for military service in World War II and served four years in the Infantry in Germany and the Philippines. He was discharged as a Major.

Beeman returned to become District Ranger at Union Creek and later at Butte Falls, both on the Rogue River National Forest in Oregon. In 1954 he moved to the Wenatchee National Forest in Washington as fire staff officer and in 1957 transferred to the Regional Office.

Beeman is a charter member of the International Right of Way Association, served as president of his chapter, and was named "Right of Way Man of the Year" in 1974. He has published many articles. He has served as chapter president or chairman of several organizations including: Society of American Foresters, Organization of Professional Employees in the Department of Agriculture, and the Forest Service 30 Year Club. He has sung in church choirs for 40 years.

Beeman and his wife Ernestine, a former school teacher, have been married 43 years. They have a daughter, Gloria, and two grandchildren in Drain, Oregon, and a son, Bruce, in Lakeview, Oregon.

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